

VZCZCXRO2840
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHUJA #1506/01 2171528
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 041528Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3540
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 9702
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 0911
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001506

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W AND AF/RSA
DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR-AGAMA
TREASURY FOR PETERS AND HALL
DOC FOR 3317/ITA/OA/KBURRESS, 3130/USFC/OIO/ANESA/DHARRIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ECIN](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#) [ECOWAS](#)

SUBJECT: ECOWAS SEEKS \$31 MILLION DONOR SUPPORT FOR CAPACITY
BUILDING PLAN

¶1. Summary: On July 7, development partners of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met in Abuja to consider the draft 2008/2009 ECOWAS Commission Capacity Building plan (CBP) and discuss strategies for its implementations with donor support. ECOWAS CBP in 2009 will focus on regional infrastructure in energy and transport, implementation of community levy protocol, a common external tariff (CET), and conclusion of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Commission. The CBP implementation will give priority to service departments, especially strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. ECOWAS committed to ensure that all capacity building supports are guided by its Vision 2020 and strategic framework documents. President Chambas announced the establishment of CBP coordinating mechanism headed by a Vice President and assisted by the new Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. Regarding the CBP resource requirements, ECOWAS presented a total cost estimate of \$55 million with \$31 million funding gap of which \$21 million is short-term priority need. The donors were enthusiastic regarding progress already achieved in capacity building and the development of the 2008/2009 CBP. They expressed joint commitment to support ECOWAS but with the 2008/2009 CBP as the basis for guiding the work of the Capacity Building Plan Thematic Group (CBPTG). ECOWAS was urged to harmonize all parallel donor funds support into CBP; revise the Joint Financing Agreement to include new partners; and include other bilateral and multilateral partners in the CBP process. End Summary.

¶2. The Third ECOWAS/Development Partners Thematic Group Meeting held on July 7 considered the Draft 2008/2009 ECOWAS Commission Capacity Building Plan and discussed strategies for its implementation. President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, in an opening address delivered on his behalf by the Vice President, Jean de Dieu Somba, underlined the importance of capacity building for the effective implementation of ECOWAS integration programs. He expressed satisfaction with ECOWAS on-going efforts at capacity building; and cited examples of some key achievements including the strategic planning mainstreaming, adoption of the new ECOWAS Vision 2020, development of operational documents, and the transformation of the ECOWAS executive secretariat into a Commission. (Note: Adopted June 15, 2007, ECOWAS Vision 2020 is to convert West Africa into a borderless region where citizens can create and avail themselves of opportunities for sustainable production. End Note).

•
ECOWAS Vision 2020

•
¶3. The Vice President said ECOWAS Vision 2020 efforts at transformation have brought several new challenges such as: anchoring strategic planning and results based management; absorbing donor support; and finalizing a capacity building plan. To address these challenges, the Vice President announced the establishment of

a CBP coordinating mechanism headed by him and assisted by the new Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

¶4. The ECOWAS 2009 CBP immediate focus will be:

- regional infrastructure in energy and transport,
- effective implementation of the community levy protocol,
- preparation of the community development program,
- free movement of persons and goods, and the right of residence and establishment,
- a common external tariff,
- drive towards macro-economic convergence,
- conclusion of an EPA with the EU,
- accelerated implementation of ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP),
- consolidation of peace and good governance in the sub-region.

¶5. Accordingly, the CBP implementation will provide service departments with capacity in priority areas, and fulfill capacity requirements in the departments of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. The goal is that all ECOWAS capacity building support be guided by Vision 2020 and its strategic frameworks.

UNDP

¶6. In a goodwill statement, the UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria, Alberic Kacou, commended the ECOWAS Commission's strategic orientation and institutional transformation. While commending the external expertise received to obtain these positive results, Kacou encouraged ECOWAS to look beyond capacity building to capacity utilization and development; and to focus simultaneously on human, organizational and system capacity development. To reduce the CBP

ABUJA 00001506 002 OF 002

financing gap, he urged the Commission to adopt non-conventional but low cost e-learning approaches to capacity building such as the Virtual Development Academy.

\$31 Million CBP Funding Gap

¶7. The working session was presided over by ECOWAS Vice President Somda. He presented the 2008/2009 ECOWAS Capacity Building Plan overview which highlighted its purpose, principles, priorities, implementation strategy and coordinating mechanism. The achievements and areas requiring intervention were also highlighted. Presenting the CBP resource requirements, Somda announced a total cost estimate of \$55 million with a \$31 million funding gap of which \$21 million is short-term priority need.

Development Partners' Review of CBP

¶8. Reviewing the CBP, donors commended the progress already achieved by the Commission in capacity building and the development of the 2008/2009 CB plan. The donors confirmed the 2008/2009 CBP as the basis for guiding the work of the Capacity Building Plan Thematic Group (CBPTG), and reaffirmed the importance of complementing ECOWAS Vision 2020 and Strategic Medium Term Plan (SMTP). Donors also made proposals designed to enrich the CBP such as the choice of priority programs, a review of the Joint Funding Agreement, and the expansion of CBP Pool Fund membership. They assured the ECOWAS Commission of additional resources from donors if capacity to absorb existing aids is demonstrated.

¶9. Canada expressed satisfaction with the harmonization of PARECIS into the Pool Fund mechanism (PARECIS is Canada's Institutional Capacity-Building Support Program for the ECOWAS Commission). Spain announced it was satisfied with procedures for harmonization in the Pool Fund mechanism, and expressed interest in joining the fund. Spain reported that a contribution to the CB pool fund would be in addition to the 10 million Euros grant for migration and development already approved for capacity building in ECOWAS member states. (Note: On July 1, ECOWAS and Spain signed a 10 million Euros Fund on Migration and Development to support ECOWAS immigration and development, small arms control as well as energy development and

access. The fund was set up to help the ECOWAS Commission and Member States develop and implement an ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration. End Note) Germany confirmed on-going support to help finalize various planning documents through complementary funding under the German Technical Cooperation agency (GTZ).

¶10. Donors urged ECOWAS to harmonize all parallel donor funds support into the CB plan; revise the Joint Financing Agreement to include new partners; and facilitate inclusion of other bilateral and multilateral partners in the capacity building process. Donors also promised to review Pool Fund procedures to soften it for accelerated absorption. The Commission was requested to prepare a project-oriented operational plan based on agreed priorities and submitted to Donors for consent.

PIASCIK